

comes next to *P. macæi*. M. Oustalet also gives many notes on the birds of New Caledonia and the New Hebrides.

45. *Oustalet on the Birds of Gaboon.*

[Catalogue Méthodique des Oiseaux recueillis par M. Marche dans son voyage sur l'Ogôoué avec description d'espèces nouvelles, par M. E. Oustalet. Nouv. Arch. Mus. sér. 2, tome ii. p. 53.]

An important memoir on the birds collected by M. Marche during his recent expedition up the Ogové, in company with MM. Savorgnan de Brazza and Dr. Ballay. To the list are added such species of the colony of Gaboon as were previously represented in the Paris Museum by unquestionably authenticated specimens. This makes a total of 152. But if we add the species enumerated by Cassin in his papers upon Du Chaillu's collections not represented at Paris, the whole avifauna of this district would appear to embrace at least 300 species.

The new species now described are *Dendropicus sharpii* and *Dicrurus sharpii*. Figures are given of *Sigmodus rufiventris*, *Ixonotus guttatus*, and *Querquedula hartlaubi*.

46. *Oustalet on Birds from the Loss Islands.*

[Note sur une petite collection d'oiseaux provenant des îles Loss, Afrique Occidentale. *Ibid.* p. 149.]

The Loss Islands lie off Sierra Leone, on the West-African coast. The collection received contained examples of fifteen mostly well-known species; but amongst them was the fine new Glossy Starling, *Coccycolius iris*, previously described (*cf.* *Ibis*, 1879, p. 475), but now figured.

XXIII.—*Letters, Announcements, &c.*

We have received the following letters addressed to the Editors of 'The Ibis':—

December 16, 1879.

SIRS,—At a meeting of the Zoological Society last May I exhibited an Owl from Mount Sinai, which I believed to

be new, and which I proposed to describe. I had had the bird in my collection for several years, and supposed it to be *Otus abyssinicus*, Guérin, of which no specimen is known to exist in this country. I afterwards ascertained that the bird I exhibited had been described by Mr. Hume in 'Stray Feathers,' 1878, p. 316, as *Asio butleri*, from Omara, on the Mekran coast of Arabia. I wish to point out, however, that the bird is not an *Asio*, but belongs undoubtedly to the genus *Syrnium*, and therefore should stand as *Syrnium butleri* (Hume).

Yours &c.,

H. B. TRISTRAM.

Durham, March 2, 1880.

SIRS,—I have read with much interest Count Salvadori's remarks on my paper on the birds of the Solomon Isles (Ibis, Jan. 1880, p. 130), and, with your permission, will make a few observations on the learned Professor's suggestions.

Collocalia linchi, H. & M. The specimen, which I only doubtfully identified as *C. linchi*, I have sent to the Count, who pronounces it to be *C. fuciphaga* (= *nidifica*), differing from Javan and Bornean specimens in having the underparts a little lighter, a feature which has been already noticed by Gray in the Louisiade specimens.

Hirundo tahitica, Gm. My specimen has the tail-feathers completely black.

If *Myzomela pammelæna* is distinct from *M. nigrita*, my bird is certainly the former; for the axillaries are jet-black in both specimens, and the inner margins of the remiges are not white, but whitish brown.

I have compared my *Piezorhynchus vidua* with Mr. Ramsay's description of *Monarcha brodiei*, with which it in no way tallies, my bird having a broad white collar, and the lower back and uropygium white, while Mr. Ramsay's bird is all black.

My *Myiagra cervinicauda* differs from Mr. Ramsay's *M. pallida* in having the whole under surface from the chin, and the under wing-coverts, chestnut, without any white whatever.

Rhipidura russata cannot be identical with *R. rufefrontata*, which has the upper surface brown, shading into rich rufous on the rump and upper tail-coverts. The whole upper surface of my bird is rich rufous.

Graucalus monotonus I compared with *G. papuensis*, from which it certainly differs. The type of my bird and also of *Edoliosoma salomonis* are both now in the British Museum.

The female of my *Ptilopus ceraseipectus* corresponds exactly with *P. solomonensis*, G. R. Gray, in the British Museum. But as the plumage is simply of a uniform green, with yellow under tail-coverts, and in no way distinguishable from that of the female of other species, such as *P. rivolii* and *P. prasinorrhous*, I doubt whether Gray's name can stand, as it is only the locality which enables us to identify it.

Count Salvadori has kindly sent me his monograph on the subgenus *Globicera*; and I find that my *G. richardsi* is undoubtedly a mere synonym of his *G. rufigula*, and must therefore be ignored.

Yours &c.,

H. B. TRISTRAM.

February 11, 1880.

SIRS,—Allow me to correct a slight accidental error in the footnote at p. 43 of the present volume; the specimen of *Urubitinga anthracina*, there mentioned as recently added to the Norwich Museum, was not sent to England from Dominica, but from St. Vincent. I would also ask permission to correct a misprint in a letter of my own at p. 144, where "Easton, in Norfolk," should be read instead of "Eastern Norfolk."

I am, &c.,

J. H. GURNEY.

SIRS,—I have read with much interest the news in the last number of 'The Ibis' of the rediscovery of the rare and remarkably formed Humming-bird *Loddigesia mirabilis*, of which, until now, only the original specimen in the Loddige

collection was known to naturalists. When passing some time at Chachapoyas in 1860, on my way across the Andes and down the Amazons (during which I made an unsuccessful attempt to penetrate to the great "elbow" or bend of the Marañon at the Pongo de Manseriche, the first barrier to navigation on the great river), I met with six Indians of the Aguarunas tribe; and the chief of the party wore a chaplet adorned with the body and the unmistakable crossed and spatula-tipped tail of this rare species. Although not aware at the time of the great value of the bird, I endeavoured to obtain both this chaplet and several other articles of the very scanty apparel and adornments worn by these Indians; but on that occasion nothing in the shape of knives or even liquor would tempt them, and the chance was lost. Subsequently, on conversing with Mr. Gould, he showed me his figure of this bird, which I at once recognized; and I fear he will never forgive me for not having obtained that specimen by some means, forcible or otherwise. However, I did what I could to atone for my over-conscientiousness by sending out drawings of the bird and by writing to my friends at Chachapoyas and urging them to take all possible steps to procure it. The drawings were duly distributed, and much commented on in subsequent letters which I received; but no specimens were ever obtained. My impression is (but I am now speaking from memory) that Mathews, the botanical collector, who procured this bird in 1835, met with it during an excursion to an estate named Hidalgo, which is reached by a rather steep descent into a very dark and humid forest-clad gorge; but there are several such in the neighbourhood of Chachapoyas, and Quipachacha may well be another of them, or even a locality on the very same road. The city of Chachapoyas (it boasts of a cathedral) is situated on the Eastern Andes, at about 5000 feet above sea-level, and in a temperate climate; but the descents in the direction of the river flowing into the Amazons (or Marañon, as it is there called) are so exceedingly abrupt that a very much warmer temperature and thick forest would easily be reached within a distance of three kilometres from the capital. We shall doubtless receive further particulars, and probably more spe-

cimens, and in any case both Herr Stolzmann and Graf von Berlepsch are to be congratulated on this rediscovery of a species which had so long baffled the cupidity of collectors.

Yours &c.,

HOWARD SAUNDERS.

Royal Zoological Museum, Dresden,
March 11, 1880.

SIRS,—In 'The Ibis' for 1879, at p. 133, in my paper on the birds of Celebes, I did not make up my mind conclusively as to the specific difference between *Streptocitta torquata* (Temm.), from North Celebes, and *Streptocitta caledonica* (Lath.), from the southern parts of that island, but waited for further specimens before doing so.

I have now three specimens of *Streptocitta* from South Celebes, all differing in the same manner from North-Celebean ones, of which I have before me a series of sixteen individuals from different parts of the Minahassa and the Gulf of Tomini. All three of the southern form have the base of the bill of a deep yellow, even orange-colour—in one specimen not only the first third, but half the bill. The greenish hue of the plumage of these specimens, when put side by side with North-Celebean ones, is not to be passed over, especially the lower rump and the uropygium, which are obviously greenish instead of bluish.

I therefore do not hesitate to consider *Streptocitta caledonica* (Lath.) a well-defined species from South Celebes. It would be interesting to get specimens of *Streptocitta* from the centre of the island, or from those parts where *Streptocitta torquata* and *S. caledonica* meet. I have already mentioned (*l. c.*) that Dr. Beccari thinks he saw both species together near Kandari, in South Celebes; but as they only differ in such a slight manner, it would be difficult to decide to which form individuals belong without having the birds in hand.

I obtained male and female of *Streptocitta caledonica*; the specimens were shot at Kalibangkere, in the district of Tjamba (South Celebes), in the month of March. The native name

of the bird in that district is "Ponto Kalong." The collector notes the iris to be brown, the feet greyish black.

Yours &c.,

A. B. MEYER.

The Socotran Expedition.—Colonel Godwin-Austen not having been able to undertake the expedition to Socotra this spring, the Committee of the British Association have arranged with Professor Isaac B. Balfour, of the University of Glasgow, to proceed there to investigate the zoology and botany of the island, and to make collections. Professor Balfour left England in January last by the French mail for Aden, and arrived there on the 24th of that month. Here Capt. Heron, of H.M.S. 'Sea-Gull,' having received instructions from the Admiralty to assist Professor Balfour, offered to take him on to Socotra, and was ready to start on the 2nd February. Unfortunately a gale sprang up, and detained them until the 5th, when they started, but were compelled to return again, to wait until the wind abated. Ultimately Prof. Balfour and his assistants were safely landed in Goulburn Bay, at the west end of Socotra, on Feb. 11, weather not permitting the vessel to go round to the principal port, Tamarida. Prof. Balfour had formed pretty high expectations of the island from what he had heard, but these were greatly exceeded by the reality. The flora was found to be rich and varied; and 150 species of plants, some of great interest, were obtained in a few days. Birds were numerous, as also reptiles and insects. There was plenty of water, and some splendid *Dytisci*. The geology was very perplexing—granite, limestone, and dioritic rocks being mixed up in an extraordinary manner. Prof. Balfour has as a companion an officer of the 6th Royals, who can sketch and take surveys, and, besides his collector from the Glasgow Botanic Gardens, has with him several natives and an interpreter from Aden. We trust that the Professor, who will return in April, will bring back a good series of the birds of Socotra, including the "Emeu" of Lieut. Wellsted.

Fossil Asiatic Ostriches.—The last number of the ‘Geological Magazine’ contains a very interesting article by Mr. William Davies, of the British Museum, upon some fossil bird-remains from the Siwalik Hills*. Mr. Davies, amongst other things, gives a good description and figure of the important bones, in the the British Museum, upon which the *Struthio asiaticus* of A. Milne-Edwards, shortly indicated in his ‘Oiseaux fossiles de la France’ (ii. p. 587), was based. They consist of a “distal end of a tarso-metatarsal of a two-toed bird, with the proximal half of the first phalange of the third toe in its natural position.” Mr. Davies tells us that the result of a careful comparison of the bones with the corresponding bones of the African Ostrich (*Struthio camelus*) is that, as regards form and size, they are identical. After giving the facts necessary to prove this to be the case, Mr. Davies continues as follows:—

“As the fragments of fossil bones above described certainly belong to the genus *Struthio*, they establish the fact, so far as our present knowledge extends, that the Ostrich had its early home in Asia, its fossil remains not having hitherto been found elsewhere; also, that as regards size, the ancient bird was not inferior to its modern African congener, and in respect to the form of the bones of the limbs is indistinguishable from it. This intimate resemblance tends to the inference, if not to the assurance, that the African Ostrich is a direct descendant, perhaps slightly modified as regards the cervical vertebræ, of the older Asiatic bird, which, at some remote period, impelled by circumstances, migrated from its original home to its present habitat. And, whatever the physical changes that necessitated the migration, it was not accomplished alone; for the Giraffe, now confined exclusively to the African continent, had also an Asiatic origin, and has left its remains, associated with those of the Ostrich, in the same Indian deposits.

* “On some Fossil Bird-Remains from the Siwalik Hills in the British Museum.” By William Davies, F.G.S., of the Geological Department, British Museum. (‘Geological Magazine,’ new series, decade ii. vol. vii. p. 18.)

“Referring to the fossil Giraffe, Dr. Falconer observes that the ‘teeth come so near those of the existing African species in size and form as to be undistinguishable’*.

“And with regard to the existing African mammalia, Mr. Wallace, commenting upon the former junction of Africa with Asia, says that ‘all over Africa, but more especially in the east, we have abundance of large ungulates and felines, antelopes, giraffes, buffaloes, elephants, and rhinoceroses, with lions, leopards, and hyænas, of types all now or recently found in India’†. He elsewhere observes that the migration was ‘apparently effected by the way of Syria and the shores of the Red Sea,’ and that ‘by this route the old south Palæ-arctic fauna, indicated by the fossils of Pikermi (Greece) and Siwalik Hills, poured into Africa’ (p. 288).”

In a recent part of the ‘Records of the Geological Survey of India,’ Mr. Lydekker has described some bones from the same deposit in the Siwaliks, now in the Calcutta Museum, which he refers to the genus *Dromæus*‡. If Mr. Lydekker’s views are correct, it is certainly a most remarkable fact, as Mr. Davies points out, that these two forms of Struthious birds now so widely separated should have once coexisted in the same district.

Besides this, Mr. Davies, in the article above referred to, describes and figures an “entire second phalanx of the middle toe of a tridactyle Struthious bird, distinct from the Emu and the Cassowary, though approaching nearer to the latter than the former, from the same formation. It would therefore appear that three forms of Struthioid birds were contemporaneous in the ancient plains of India.

Conothraupis, a new Genus of Tanagers.—I have been kindly permitted to acquire in exchange from the Warsaw Museum a skin of *Schistochlamys speculigera*, Gould (P. Z. S.

* Palæontological Memoirs, vol. i. p. 26.

† ‘Geographical Distribution of Animals,’ vol. i. p. 286.

‡ “Notes on some Siwalik Birds,” by R. Lydekker, B.A., Geological Survey of India, ‘Records of the Geological Survey of India,’ vol. xii. p. 52.

1855, p. 68), one of the few Tanagers wanting to my series. I am now convinced that the genus *Schistochlamys* (sive *Diucopis*) is not the proper position for this curious bird, which is remarkable for its straight gonys and but very slightly incurved culmen. I propose to remove it to near *Arremon*, where I think it will fit in better, under the new generic term *Conothraupis* (κῶνος, *conus*, and θρανίς, *tanagra*); so that it will stand as *Conothraupis speculigera*. Mr. Gould's types were from the Ucayali (*Hauxwell*); M. Taczanowski received his specimens from Callacate, in Central Peru (*Stolzmann*).—P. L. SCLATER.

Meyer's Chart of New Guinea.—In a privately printed volume entitled 'Auszüge aus den auf einer Neu-Guinea Reise im Jahre 1873 geführten Tagebüchern von Adolf Bernhard Meyer, als Erläuterung zu den Karten der Geelvink-Bai und des Maccluer-Golfes,' printed at Dresden in 1875, a copy of which Dr. Meyer has kindly forwarded to one of us, is given a photographic copy of the author's original MS. chart of the great Bay of Geelvink, in New Guinea, and the islands lying therein. Dr. Meyer's route during his expedition in 1873 is shown by a red line. There is also a lithographed chart of the neck of land between the Bay of Geelvink and the head of Maccluer's Gulf, on a larger scale, to show Dr. Meyer's track when he traversed the isthmus. These maps are illustrated by extracts from Dr. Meyer's journal, which are so arranged as to give a complete account of this celebrated journey. The volume is, we need hardly say, of the greatest interest to those who are concerned with the natural history of New Guinea and its islands.

There would appear to be no serious difficulty in a determined explorer following Dr. Meyer's plan of hiring a vessel at Ternate and visiting various spots in this part of New Guinea. Dr. Meyer's reception by the natives seems to have been everywhere of the most satisfactory description.

Obituary.—Mr. EDWARD HEARLE RODD, whose name is well known to all students of British ornithology, died at

Penzance on the 25th of January last, at the age of 70. The son of a clergyman belonging to an old Cornish family, Mr. Rodd was educated as a solicitor, and became a member of the chief legal firm in Penzance at an early age. Commencing from the year 1838, he was the author of numerous communications to the 'Reports of the Royal Institution of Cornwall' and the 'Zoologist' on the ornithology of the county. In 1864 these papers were collected and republished under the title of 'A List of British Birds occurring in the Land's-end District.' A second edition of this list, in an enlarged form, was issued in 1869; and we understand that a still more elaborate work on the same subject, entitled 'The Birds of Cornwall and the Scilly Islands,' which was left nearly ready for the press at the time of the author's decease, will be edited by Mr. Harting, and will shortly be published by Messrs. Trübner. Mr. Rodd's collection of birds and scientific books are left, we understand, to his nephew, Mr. Edward Rodd, of Chard, Dorset.

Dr. THOMAS MAYO BREWER, the well-known ornithologist of Boston, Mass., and an occasional contributor to this Journal, died on the 23rd of January last, at the age of 66 years, after a short illness. In 1839 Dr. Brewer published an edition of Wilson's 'American Ornithology,' with a synopsis of all the North-American species then known. He was also one of the joint authors, along with Professor Baird and Mr. Ridgway, of the important 'History of North-American Birds,' published in 1874. Dr. Brewer paid special attention to oology, and was one of the leading authorities on the eggs of American birds. His 'North-American Oology,' of which the first volume was published in 1857 by the Smithsonian Institution, was, unfortunately, not continued.

We also announce with much regret the death, at the early age of 34, of Mr. JOHN EDMUND STURGE, of Olveston Hall, Montserrat, W. I. Mr. Sturge had lately commenced the study of the unknown ornithology of the island in which he resided, and had begun to supply collections to one of the Editors of this Journal, which it was hoped might lead to a

complete knowledge of the avifauna of Montserrat. A note on Mr. Sturge's collections will be found in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' for 1879 (p. 764).

New Works in preparation.—Mr. R. G. Wardlaw-Ramsay is editing for the Marchioness of Tweeddale a reprint of the ornithological works of the late Marquis. The work will be in quarto, and make two volumes, which, furnished with the editor's notes and indexes, will be most useful to those who are studying the birds of India and Eastern Asia, and will form a valuable memorial of the much-lamented author. Dr. Hartlaub, we understand, is intending to publish a new edition of his excellent little 'Handbook of the Birds of Madagascar.' Mr. Seebohm is working hard on his volume of the British-Museum Bird-Catalogue, which will embrace the Turdidæ and Sylviidæ. The volume on the birds of the 'Challenger' Expedition, containing a reprint of the reports on the several collections already published in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society,' with notes and additions by the editor (Sclater), is nearly ready for press. It will be illustrated by thirty coloured plates.

Salvadori's 'Ornithology of New Guinea.'—The first part of Count Salvadori's 'Ornitologia della Papuasie e delle Molucche' is now ready for issue. It contains the Accipitres, Psittaci, and Picariæ, of which there are 255 species credited by the author to New Guinea and the Moluccas. The volume is in quarto, and contains about 560 pages. There is a short preface, the description of the species, a systematic and a synonymic index. Of each species there is the full synonymy, a Latin description, a mention of all the localities inhabited, a descriptive catalogue of all the specimens collected in New Guinea and the Moluccas by Beccari, D'Albertis, and Bruijn, and general remarks. The volume will be issued in the 'Memorie della R. Accademia delle Scienze di Torino.' Only a very limited number of separate copies

have been printed, for which immediate application should be made to the author, Zoological Museum of Turin, or to any bookseller.

Ober's Researches in the West Indies.—We are glad to hear that Mr. F. Ober, the collector for the Smithsonian Institution, left New York early last month again for the West Indies, to continue his researches into the fauna of the various islands, in which he has already made such notable discoveries.